

# REPORT

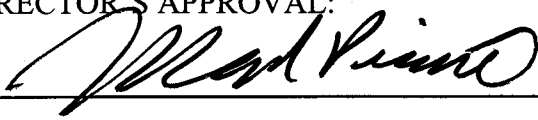
DATE: September 2, 2004

TO: Administration Committee and Regional Council

FROM: Heather Copp/ CFO *HC*

SUBJECT: Amendment to the SCAG Employee Travel Policy

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:



RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve

BACKGROUND: The SCAG Employee Travel Policy is being amended to include the following:

1. New language: Employees may request the web-rate from Patterson Travel and determine if it is the most economically feasible. The web-rate is usually non-refundable and possibly non-transferable. Please consider when making a reservation.

This addition will allow employee's to take advantage of lower airfare when possible.

2. New language: Exception: If there is a SCAG Board function that an employee must attend and the hotel rate exceeds the SCAG allowable rate, the Executive Director can authorize the amount of lodging that exceeds the SCAG allowable rate to be paid out of the general fund.

This addition will keep the employees from personally absorbing the cost of lodging over the allowable rate when required to attend Board functions that are not held at SCAG offices. This typically occurs during a Board retreat. For example: The lodging rate for the Board retreat in Temecula was \$109.00 and the SCAG reimbursable rate was \$84.00. Normally the employee would have to absorb the difference. This change would allow them to be reimbursed from the general fund the difference between the \$109 and the \$84 with the Executive Director's approval.

3. New language: Per the Federal per diem policy, if an employee is staying at a hotel where the conference is being held and the conference rate exceeds the Federal out-of-state lodging rate, reimbursement can be made for the higher rate if pre-approved by SCAG's Deputy Director and is in accordance with the Federal per diem policy.

This language explicitly allows SCAG to pay conference rate lodging prices when attending a conference consistent with the federal travel policy.

FISCAL IMPACT: None *HC*



## Travel Policy and Guidelines.

Welcome to the Travel Policy Section. This section provides policy and guideline information associated with your official business travel. It is the policy of SCAG to maintain an accountable travel plan. An accountable travel policy satisfies four key requirements: (1) business related, (2) substantiation of expenses, (3) return of unspent amounts, and (4) timeliness. We recommend that staff use the most cost-effective choice (considering both direct expense as well as staff time) when incurring reimbursable travel expenses. Actual travel costs shall be considered reasonable and allowable, to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by operations as a result of SCAG's policy.

### AUTHORITY TO TRAVEL

Travel, other than mileage only travel, must be approved and authorized by management before the travel begins. A travel authorization (TA) form, <http://www.scag.ca.gov/formbank/>, must be filled out and signed by the staff member. The staff member is responsible for providing the date and purpose of the travel, WBS number, and the estimated cost of transportation, hotel, meals, and other costs, which may arise. The staff member must also verify the available budget. When the TA form is completed and submitted to the manager and director for review, approval, and authorization, the cost will be encumbered against the travel budget. Manager/Director approval must be conditioned on available budget in the appropriate work element.

### MILEAGE RATE CONDITIONS

The mileage rate of reimbursement for private vehicle usage is \$.34 cents per mile. Mileage claimed is supported by a statement of description of travel expenses containing a description of the beginning and ending destination points. See Less than or greater than 24 hours travel for rules.

### MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Policy requires employees to use the method of transportation, which is in the best interest of SCAG.

### AIRLINE AND CAR RENTAL

SCAG participates in a travel Program. The program allows SCAG to use the State approved Travel Agency, Patterson Travel and use of a Business Travel Account through American Express. Patterson has assigned an individual Business Travel Account Number (BTN) through American Express to SCAG staff members who frequently travel. Do not let anyone else use your number. Additionally, each Department has been assigned a group BTN for other staff use. Each Department's Senior Administrative Assistant will be responsible for the group's BTN number and for the handling of the travel arrangements. The BTN number is only valid with Patterson Travel Agency; this is not a regular American Express credit card.

- ☐ Employees are required to use the SCAG official travel agency. Failure to use the official travel agency may result in traveling employees securing non-refundable flights or flights purchased for greater than the SCAG reimbursable rate. Employees are liable for any amounts paid over the SCAG official contract rate. Employees may request the web-rate from Patterson Travel and determine if it is the most economically feasible. The web-rate is usually non-refundable and possibly non-transferable. Please consider when making a reservation.
- ☐ Employees are required to complete the SCAG 's Travel Authorization (TA) form. If you need an estimated cost of travel to complete your TA form, you may obtain it by contacting Patterson Travel Consultant at 1-800-353-3565 or (916) 929-3661
- ☐ Once your TA is approved, complete the Patterson Travel **ResFAX** form (see form attached). The ResFAX form and your TA form must be fax/e-mail , by the department's Senior Administrative Assistant, to Patterson Travel .FAX: (916) 9255-1509 or (916) 925-0873
- ☐ Please ensure that the following information is provided to the travel consultant:
  - Your name (Person making the arrangement)
  - Traveler name(s)
  - Date(s) of travel

- Origin and destination of your air travel
  - Preferred airline and flight numbers (if known)
  - Departure and/or arrival times desired
  - Car rental needs
  - Special ticket delivery instructions, if any
  - Advise if you already have a reservation and are making a change
- ☐ After Patterson travel has completed your travel reservation, the itinerary will be faxed or e-mailed within 48 hours. The itinerary will include all the travel information required for your trip and a **confirmation number**. If you have not received your confirmation within 48 hours, please contact Patterson Travel
- ☐ Car Rentals: Employees needing a car rental during the trip will indicate this on the Patterson ResFAX form. Patterson Travel will reserve the rental car approved under our contract. Employees who operate vehicles on official business must have a valid California driver's license.
- ☐ **Changes and Cancellations:** If your entire trip or a portion of your trip needs to be cancelled, Patterson must be notified as soon as possible preferably by e-mail. Unused airline tickets and unused ticketless flight reservations must be cancelled within 24 hours after the flight time as this is considered a prepayment and will not be refunded unless cancelled. **They should NOT be traded in or held for future flights.** If you were issued a refundable paper ticket, return it to Patterson Travel for processing. In the event of a schedule change by a provider regarding a reservation, Patterson will notify the appropriate SCAG contact immediately. In most cases, a schedule change does not require any modification to existing tickets, however, if this is not the case, you will be notified by the Patterson Consultant.
- ☐ **Emergency Travel:** Emergency travel, other than mileage, will require the approval of a Director. An example of this would be the situation when the original traveler is unable to make the trip and decides to send another staff member in his/her place. Patterson charges a fee for this service; therefore, it is only to be used in emergency travel situations. Emergency travel should be made through Patterson's after hour service and **not** directly with the airlines. These arrangements should be made by contacting (800) 823-9188, indicate you are traveling on SCAG business
- ☐ **Note: only the Patterson BTN will secure the SCAG contract rate.**

Note: Employees may view booked itineraries on line at [www.viewtrip.com](http://www.viewtrip.com). You will need your Passenger Name Record Locator. The Record Locator is on all itineraries located on the top-left side of the invoice. From viewtrip.com, you will also be able to view FlightTracker. FlightTracker will give you the current status of any flights between major cities within the United States and Canada.

## MODES OF TRANSPORTATION-OTHER

- ☐ Private vehicle: Employees who operate private vehicles on official business must have an actual California driver's license and appropriate auto insurance. Reimbursement will be based on mileage.
- ☐ Rental car: Reservations must be made through Patterson Travel Agency. The contracted rate used is for a compact vehicle. Vehicle upgrades must be justified and have supervisor's approval. Travelers are encouraged to refuel gas tanks prior to returning vehicles. Receipts for fuel purchase shall be submitted with your Travel/Regional Expense Reimbursement Form.
- ☐ Public transportation
- ☐ A taxi should only be used if it is the best alternative when evaluating cost/time
- ☐ A taxi must not be used between home and SCAG.
- ☐ Reimbursement is not allowed for motorcycle, private plane, or boat use.

## SHORT TERM TRAVEL ASSIGNMENTS

### Policy:

When the following conditions are met, short-term lodging and meals may be allowed if travel is:

- No more than 30 calendar days
- At least 50 miles away from staff's headquarters and residence

### **Lodging Rates:**

a) Actual up to \$84.00, Statewide, plus taxes and surcharges Exception: If there is a SCAG Board function that an employee must attend and the hotel rate exceeds the SCAG allowable rate, the Executive Director can authorize the amount of the lodging that exceeds the SCAG allowable rate to be paid out of the general fund.

b) Actual up to \$110.00, plus taxes and surcharges, in the following counties:

- Los Angeles County
- San Diego County

c) Actual up to \$140.00, plus taxes and surcharges in the following counties:

- Alameda County
- San Francisco County
- Santa Clara County
- San Mateo County

d) For out-of-state travel, actual costs up to the Federal rates for out of state lodging, plus taxes and surcharges. Per the Federal per diem policy, if an employee is staying at a hotel where the conference is being held and the conference rate exceeds the Federal out of state lodging rate, reimbursement can be made for the higher rate if pre-approved by SCAG's Deputy Director and is in accordance with the Federal policy. Reference [www.policyworks.gov](http://www.policyworks.gov), for Federal per diem rates.

### **Meal and Incidental Rates**

The reimbursement of meals and incidentals has both a time and monetary restraint; both conditions must be documented and met. An employee may not claim meal reimbursement when the meal is furnished to the employee or otherwise paid for. **Note: Alcoholic beverage purchases are not reimbursed.**

#### **Meal and Incidental Rates and Mileage Requirements-Travel Less Than 24 Hours**

Breakfast cost?

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 6:00 a.m., and ends at or after 9:00 a.m., you may claim the actual amount of your breakfast up to **\$6.00**.

Lunch cost?

Lunch and incidentals **are not to be claimed** for trips less than 24 hours.

Dinner cost?

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 4:00 p.m., and ends at or after 7:00 p.m., you may claim the actual amount of your dinner up to **\$18.00**.

Incidental costs?

Incidentals **cannot** be claimed for trips less than 24 hours.

Mileage?

Mileage is reimbursed for actual miles traveled in excess of round trip distance from home to work.

#### **Meal and Incidental Rates and Mileage Requirements-Travel More Than 24 Hours (or Last fractional Part)**

Breakfast cost?

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 6:00 a.m., and ends at or after 8:00 a.m., you may claim the actual amount of your breakfast up to **\$6.00**.

**Lunch cost?**

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 11:00 a.m., and ends at or after 2:00 p.m., you may claim the actual amount of your lunch cost up to **\$10.00**

**Dinner cost?**

If your travel, from home/meeting, begins at or before 4:00 p.m., and ends at or after 7:00 p.m., you may claim the actual amount of your dinner cost up to **\$18.00**.

**Incidental costs?**

After each 24-hour period, you may claim the actual amount of your incidental cost up to **\$6.00**

The term "incidental expenses" includes, but is not limited to, expenses for laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing, and fees and tips for services, such as porters and baggage carriers. The term does not include taxicab fares, lodging taxes, or the cost of telegrams or telephone calls.

**Mileage?**

Mileage is reimbursed for actual miles traveled.

**Meal and Incidental Rates and Requirements-Travel More Than 24 Hours**

There is **no travel time test** for a 24 hour travel day (i.e. If you begin your travel on Tuesday, return from your travel on Thursday, Wednesday is considered a 24 hour travel day, therefore the cost of meals and incidentals are reimbursable up to their respective dollar limit).

**Note:** For out-of-state travel, meals and incidentals rates are the same as the California rate

**TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

**Policy and Guidelines**

The policy requires the reimbursement request for travel related expenses be submitted within 60 days after you incur the expenses. There are two forms (Travel less than 24 hours and Travel greater than 24 hours) which may be used to reimburse travel expenses. These forms are accessed [www.scag.ca.gov/formbank](http://www.scag.ca.gov/formbank). The employee and the approving manager are responsible for ensuring the travel budget is adequate to cover the travel amounts claimed. Before approving the reimbursement, the manager or director must review the expenditures and validate the amounts against the budget.

- ☐ The travel expense reimbursement form shall either be typewritten or in ink and properly itemized. You must attach the Travel Authorization form to the travel expense reimbursement form.
- ☐ Receipts, **originals only**, must be taped to 8 1/2 x 11" paper then stapled to the Expense Reimbursement Form.
- ☐ Receipts Requirements: see below

**Receipt Requirements:**

Type of Expense	Receipt Required (YES)	No Receipt Required (NO)	Explanation
BUSINESS EXPENSES:			
Business phone calls, faxes, office supplies, etc	X		When over \$5.00
EXPENSES:			
Lodging (ALL types of lodging)	X		

Meals: use California rates		X	Breakfast-Actual up to \$6.00. Lunch-Actual up to \$10.00. Dinner-Actual up to \$18.00.
Incidentals		X	Actual up to \$6.00
TRANSPORTATION:			
Airfare	X		
Train	X		When the cost exceeds \$25.00
Gas for rental car	X		
Parking, taxis, shuttles, streetcars, local rapid transit, and road tolls	X		When the cost exceeds \$10.00
Rental Cars	X		

- ☐ Claims may not crossover more than one fiscal year. Submit separate claims forms when travel extends beyond one fiscal year.

#### What goes on a Reimbursement Form

- ☐ Claimant's information.
- ☐ All appropriate expenses (lodging, transportation, meals, mileage, etc).
- ☐ Dates and times when expense occurred.
- ☐ Location/purpose of each trip, and any additional justification required.
- ☐ Original signatures of both claimant and supervisor and, when applicable, the designated manager's signature. **All signatures must be in ink.**
- ☐ Appropriate expenditure WBS number.

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. If my Travel/Regional Expense Reimbursement Form has been misrouted or lost en route to Accounting, can I send a duplicate photocopy for payment?**

Yes, however, the employee and supervisor must resign the Travel/Regional Expense Reimbursement Form. In addition the form must indicate "RESUBMITTAL" in bold letters across the top of the form and copies of the receipts must be attached with an explanation the originals were lost en route.

**2. Does my lodging receipt need to be itemized?**

Yes, lodging receipt must be itemized listing all expenses (room, tax, phone call, etc.) separately. The receipt must also have a zero balance showing the payment was made.

**3. If I rent a vehicle for SCAG business and will also be traveling on personal business, can I use the same rental car?**

No, the rental for personal business must be under separate contract. Employees are prohibited from using the state contract rental rates. Employees wanting to retain a commercial vehicle for personal use must make prior arrangements with the vendor at the public commercial rate.

**4. What happens if I lose a receipt?**

In the event of a lost receipt, employees are responsible for obtaining a copy of the receipt from the vendor (a fax copy will suffice). In the few cases where a copy of a lost receipt cannot be obtained (i.e., parking), you must document in writing the circumstances beyond your control. In the absence of a receipt, the amount of the reimbursement shall be limited to the receipt requirement base amount noted in the table on page 4. For example in the absence of a receipt for parking, the refund amount shall be limited to \$10.00

#### CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS AND WEB SITE ADDRESSES

**Phone and Fax Numbers**

Patterson Travel Phone	(916)929-3661 or 1-800-353-3565
Patterson Travel -Emergency Travel- after hours	(800) 823-9188
Patterson Travel Fax	(916)925-1509 or ( 916) 925-0873

**Web Site and Email Addresses**

View Travel Booking/Trip Status	<a href="http://www.viewtrip.com">www.viewtrip.com</a>
Federal Rate for Out of State Lodging	<a href="http://www.policyworks.gov">www.policyworks.gov</a>
Forms Management	<a href="http://www.scag.ca.gov/formbank">www.scag.ca.gov/formbank</a>

**ATTN: State Team****RESFAX****SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT****(916) 925-1509****OR****(916) 925-0873****Travel Arranger Name:** \_\_\_\_\_**Instructions:**

1. Consult the Sacramento Flight guide for desired flights. If you do not have desired flights in mind, you can indicate origin and destination with approximate departure and/or arrival times.
2. Indicate the desired flight(s) in the section below.
3. Fax/e-mail this request to the California Services Department at Patterson Travel.

	Airline	Dept time	Date	From	To	Car
Flight #1						
Flight #2						
Flight #3						
Flight #4						

Passenger(s): \_\_\_\_\_

State Department Name: Southern California Association of Government

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Hotel Request: \_\_\_\_\_